

The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY
THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

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DOROTHY.

You say that my love is plain;
But that I can ne'er allow,
When I look at the thought for others
That's written on her brow.

Her eyes are not fine, I own
She hasn't a Grecian nose,
But a smile for others' pleasures
And a tear for others' woes;
And yet I will own she's plain,—
Plain to be understood;
For who can doubt that her nature
Is simple and pure and good?

You say that you think her slow;
But how can that be with one
Who's the first to do a kindness
Whenever it can be done?
Quick to perceive a want,
Quicker to set it right,
Quickest in overlooking
Injury, wrong, and slight.
And yet she is slow indeed,—
Slow any praise to claim,
Slow to see faults in others,
Slow to give careless blame.

Nothing to say for herself?
That is the fault you find?
Hark to her words to the children,
Merry and bright and kind;

Hark to her words to the sick;
Look at her patient ways;
Every word she utters
Speaks in the speaker's praise.
Nothing to say for herself!
Yet right, most right, you are;
But plenty to say for others,
And that is better by far.

You say she is "commonplace";
But there you make a mistake;
I would I could think she were so,
For other maidens' sake.
Purity, truth, and love,—
Are they such common things?
If hers were a common nature,
Women would all have wings.
Talent she may not have,
Beauty, nor wit, nor grace;
But, until she's among the angels,
She will not be commonplace.
—*Household Words.*

A NEW ENGLAND SAINT

Instead of a Sermon.

My earliest recollections of Aunt Esther were of a bright-faced, cheerful, witty, quick-moving, little, middle-aged person, who came into our house, like a good fairy, whenever there was a call of sickness or trouble. If an accident happened in the great roysterer family of eight or ten children (and when was not something happening to some of us?), and we were shut up in a sick-room, then, duly as daylight, came the quick step and cheerful face of Aunt Esther,—not solemn and lugubrious, like so many sick-room nurses, but with a never-failing flow of wit and story that could beguile even the most doleful into laughing at their own afflictions. I remember how a fit of the quinsy—most tedious of all sicknesses to an active child—was gilded

and glorified into quite a fête by my having Aunt Esther all to myself for two whole days, with nothing to do but amuse me. She charmed me into smiling at the very pangs which had made me weep before, and of which she described her own experiences in a manner to make me think that, after all, the quinsy was something with an amusing side to it. Her knowledge of all sorts of medicines, gargles, and alleviatives, her perfect familiarity with every canon and law of good nursing and tending, was something that could only have come from long experience in those good old New England days when there were no nurses recognized as a class in the land, but when watching and the care of the sick were among those offices of Christian life which the families of a neighborhood reciprocally rendered each other. Even from early youth she had obeyed a special vocation as sister of charity in many a sick-room, and, with the usual keen intelligence of New England, had widened her powers of doing good by the reading of medical and physiological works. Her legends of nursing, in those days of long typhus fever and other formidable and protracted forms of disease, were, to our ears, quite wonderful; and we regarded her as a sort of patron saint of the sick-room. She seemed always so cheerful, so bright, and so devoted that it never occurred to us youngsters to doubt that she enjoyed, above all things, being with us, waiting on us all day, watching over us by night, telling us stories, and answering, in her lively and always amusing and instructive way, that incessant fire of questions with which a child persecutes a grown person.

Sometimes, as a reward of goodness, we were allowed to visit her in her own room,—a neat little parlor in the neighborhood,—whose windows looked down a hillside on one hand, under the boughs of an apple orchard, where daisies and clover and bobolinks always abounded in summer time, and on the other faced the street, with a green yard flanked by one or two shady elms between them and the street. No nun's cell was ever neater, no bee's cell ever more compactly and neatly arranged; and to us, familiar with the confusion of a great family of little ones, there was always something inviting about its stillness, its perfect

order, and the air of thoughtful repose that breathed over it. She lived there in perfect independence, doing—as it was her delight to do—every office of life for herself. She was her own cook, her own parlor and chamber maid, her own laundress; and very faultless the cooking, washing, ironing, and care of her premises were. A slice of Aunt Esther's gingerbread, one of Aunt Esther's cookies, had, we all believed, certain magical properties such as belonged to no other mortal mixture. Even a handful of walnuts that were brought from the depths of her mysterious closet had virtues in our eyes such as no other walnuts could approach. The little shelf of books that hung suspended by cords against her wall was sacred in our regard, the volumes were like no other books; and we supposed that she derived from them those stores of knowledge on all subjects, which she unconsciously dispensed among us, for she was always telling us something of metals or minerals, or gems, or plants, or animals which awakened our curiosity, stimulated our inquiries, and, above all, led us to wonder where she had learned it all. Even the slight restrictions which her neat habits imposed on our breezy and turbulent natures seemed all quite graceful and becoming. It was right, in our eyes, to cleanse our shoes on scraper and mat with extra diligence, and then to place a couple of chips under the heels of our boots when we essayed to dry our feet at her spotless hearth. We marvelled to see our own faces reflected in a thousand smiles and winks from her bright brass andirons; and a pair of radiant brass candlesticks that illustrated the mantelpiece were viewed with no less respect.

Aunt Esther's cat was a model for all cats,—so sleek, so intelligent, so decorous, and well-trained, always occupying her own cushion by the fire, and never transgressing in one iota the proprieties belonging to a cat of good breeding. She shared our affections with her mistress; and we were allowed as a great favor and privilege, now and then, to hold the favorite on our knees, and stroke her satin coat to a smoother gloss.

But it was not for cats alone that she had attractions. She was in sympathy and fellowship with everything that moved and

lived, knew every bird and beast with a friendly acquaintanceship. The squirrels that inhabited the trees in the front yard were won in time by her blandishments to come and perch on her window-sills, and thence, by trains of nuts, adroitly laid, to disport themselves on the shining cherry tea-table that stood between the windows; and we youngsters used to sit entranced with delight as they gambolled and waved their feathery tails in frolicsome security, eating rations of gingerbread, and bits of seed-cake with as good a relish as any child among us.

The habits, the rights, the wrongs, the wants, and the sufferings of the animal creation formed the subject of many an interesting conversation with her; and we boys, with the natural male instinct for hunting, trapping, and pursuing, were often made to pause in our career, remembering her pleas for the dumb things which could not speak for themselves.

Her little hermitage was the favorite resort of numerous friends. Many of the young girls who attended the village academy made her acquaintance, and nothing delighted her more than that they should come there and read to her the books they were studying, when her superior and wide information enabled her to light up and explain much that was not clear to the immature students.

In her shady retirement, too, she was a sort of Egeria to certain men of genius, who came to read to her their writings, to consult her in their arguments, and to discuss with her the literature and politics of the day,—through all which her mind moved with an equal step, yet with a sprightliness and vivacity peculiarly feminine.

Her memory was remarkably retentive, not only of the contents of books, but of all that great outlying fund of anecdote and story which the quaint and earnest New England life always supplied. There were pictures of peculiar characters, legends of true events, stranger than romance, all stored in the cabinets of her mind; and these came from her lips with the greater force because the precision of her memory enabled her to authenticate them with name, date, and circumstances of vivid reality. From that shadowy line of inci-

dents which marks the twilight boundary between the spiritual world and the present life, she drew legends of peculiar clearness, but invested with the mysterious charm which always dwells in that uncertain region; and the shrewd flash of her eye and the keen, bright smile with which she answered the wondering question, "What do you suppose it was?" or "What could it have been?" showed how evenly rationalism kept pace in her mind with romance.

The retired room in which she thus read, studied, thought, and surveyed from afar the whole world of science and literature, and in which she received friends and entertained children, was perhaps the dearest spot to her in the world. There came a time, however, when the neat little independent establishment was given up; and she went to associate herself with two of her nieces in keeping house for a boarding-school of young girls. Here her lively manners and her gracious interest in the young made her a universal favorite, though the cares she assumed broke in upon those habits of solitude and study which formed her delight. From the day that she surrendered this independency of hers, she had never, for more than a score of years, a home of her own, but filled the trying position of an accessory in the home of others. Leaving the boarding-school, she became the helper of an invalid wife and mother in the early nursing and rearing of a family of young children,—an office which leaves no privacy and no leisure. Her bed was always shared with some little one; her territories were exposed to the constant inroads of little pattering feet; and all the various sicknesses and ailments of delicate childhood made absorbing drafts upon her time.

After a while she left New England with the brother to whose family she devoted herself. The failing health of the wife and mother left more and more the charge of all things in her hands. Servants were poor and all the appliances of living had the rawness and inconvenience which in those days attended Western life. It became her fate to supply all other people's defects and deficiencies. Wherever a hand failed, there must her hand be. Whenever a foot faltered, she must step into the ranks. She was the one who thought for and cared for

and toiled for all, yet made never a claim that any one should care for her.

It was not until late in my life that I became acquainted with the deep interior sacrifice, the constant self-abnegation, which all her life involved. She was born with a strong, vehement, impulsive nature, a nature both proud and sensitive, a nature whose tastes were passions, whose likings and aversions were of the most intense and positive character. Devoted as she always seemed to the mere practical and material, she had naturally a deep romance and enthusiasm of temperament which exceeded all that can be written in novels. It was chiefly owing to this that a home and central affection of her own were never hers. In her early days of attractiveness, none who would have sought her could meet the high requirements of her ideality. She never saw her hero, and so never married. Family cares, the tending of young children, she often confessed, were peculiarly irksome to her. She had the head of a student, a passionate love for the world of books. A Protestant convent, where she might devote herself without interruption to study, was her ideal of happiness. She had, too, the keenest appreciation of poetry, of music, of painting, and of natural scenery. Her enjoyment of any of these things was intensely vivid whenever, by chance, a stray sunbeam of the kind darted across the dusty path of her life; yet in all these her life was a constant repression. The eagerness with which she would listen to any account from those more fortunate ones who had known these things showed how ardent a passion was constantly held in check. A short time before her death, talking with a friend who had visited Switzerland, she said, with great feeling, "All my life my desire to visit the beautiful places of this earth has been so intense that I cannot but hope that after my death I shall be permitted to go back and look at them."

The completeness of her self-discipline may be gathered from the fact that no child could ever be brought to believe that she had not a natural fondness for children or that she found the care of them burdensome. It was easy to see that she had naturally all those particular habits, those minute pertinacities in respect to her daily

movements and the arrangement of all her belongings, which would make the meddling, intrusive demands of infancy and childhood peculiarly hard for her to meet. Yet never was there a pair of toddling feet that did not make free with Aunt Esther's room, never a curly head that did not look up, in confiding assurance of a welcome smile, to her bright eyes. The inconsiderate and never-ceasing requirements of children and invalids never drew from her other than a cheerful response; and to my mind there is more saintship in this than in the private wearing of any number of haircloth shirts or belts lined with spikes.

In a large family of careless children there will be constant losing of thimbles and needles and scissors; but Aunt Esther was always ready, without reproach, to help the careless and the luckless. Her things, so well kept and so treasured, she was willing to lend, with many a caution and injunction, it is true, but also with a relish of right good will. And, to do us justice, we generally felt the sacredness of the trust, and were more careful of her things than of our own. If a shade of sewing-silk were wanting or a choice button or a bit of braid or tape, Aunt Esther cheerfully volunteered something from her well-kept stores, not regarding the trouble she made herself in seeking the key, unlocking the drawer, and searching out in bag or parcel just the treasure demanded. Never was more perfect precision or more perfect readiness to accommodate others.

Her little income—scarcely reaching a hundred dollars yearly—was disposed of with a generosity worthy a fortune. One-tenth was sacredly devoted to charity, and a still further sum laid by every year for presents to friends. No Christmas or New Year ever came round that Aunt Esther, out of this very tiny fund, did not find something for children and servants. Her gifts were trifling in value, but well timed,—a ball of thread-wax, a paper of pins, a pincushion,—something generally so well chosen as to show that she had been running over our needs, and noting what to give. She was no less gracious as receiver than as giver. The little articles that we made for her or the small presents that we could buy, out of our childish resources, she always declared were exactly what she

needed; and she delighted us by the care she took of them and the value she set upon them.

Her income was a source of the greatest pleasure to her, as maintaining an independence without which she could not have been happy. Though she constantly gave to every family in which she lived services which no money could repay, it would have been the greatest trial to her not to be able to provide for herself. Her dress,—always that of a true gentlewoman,—refined, quiet, and neat, was bought from this restricted sum; and her small travelling expenses were paid out of it. She abhorred anything false or flashy. Her caps were trimmed with real thread lace, and her silk dresses were of the best quality, perfectly well made and kept; and, after all, a little sum always remained over in her hands for unforeseen exigencies.

This love of independence was one of the strongest features of her life; and we often playfully told her that her only form of selfishness was the monopoly of saintship,—that she who gave so much was not willing to allow others to give to her, that she who made herself servant of all was not willing to allow others to serve her.

Among the trials of her life must be reckoned much ill-health, borne, however, with such heroic patience that it was not easy to say when the hand of pain was laid upon her. She inherited, too, a tendency to depression of spirits, which at times increased to a morbid and distressing gloom. Few knew or suspected these sufferings, so completely had she learned to suppress every outward manifestation that might interfere with the happiness of others. In her hours of depression she resolutely forebore to sadden the lives of those around her with her own melancholy; and often her darkest moods were so lighted up and adorned with an outside show of wit and humor that those who had known her intimately were astonished to hear that she had ever been subject to depression.

Her truthfulness of nature amounted almost to superstition. From her promise once given, she felt no change of purpose could absolve her; and therefore rarely would she give it absolutely, for she could not alter the thing that had gone forth from her lips. Our belief in the certainty

of her fulfilling her word was like our belief in the immutability of the laws of nature. Whoever asked her received from her the absolute truth on every subject; and, when she had no good thing to say, her silence was truly awful. When anything mean or ungenerous was brought to her knowledge, she would close her lips resolutely; but the flash in her eyes showed what she would speak, were speech permitted. In her last days she spoke to a friend of what she had suffered from the strength of her personal antipathies. "I thank God," she said, "that I believe I have at last overcome all that, too, and that there has not been, for some years, any human being toward whom I have felt a movement of dislike."

The last year of her life was a constant discipline of unceasing pain, borne with that fortitude which could make her an entertaining and interesting companion even while the sweat of mortal agony was starting from her brow. Her own room she kept as a last asylum, to which she would silently retreat when the torture became too intense for the repression of society; and there alone, with closed doors, she wrestled with her agony. The stubborn independence of her nature took refuge in this final fastness; and she prayed only that she might go down to death with the full ability to steady herself all the way, needing the help of no other hand.

The ultimate struggle of earthly feeling came when this proud self-reliance was forced to give way, and she was obliged to leave herself helpless in the hands of others. "God requires that I should give up my last form of self-will" she said. "Now I have resigned this, perhaps He will let me go home."

In a good old age, Death, the friend, came and opened the door of this mortal state, and a great soul that had served a long apprenticeship to little things went forth into the joy of its Lord,—a life of self-sacrifice and self-abnegation passed into a life of endless rest.

"But," said Rudolph, "I rebel at this life of self-abnegation and self-sacrifice. I do not think it the duty of noble women, who have beautiful natures and enlarged and cultivated tastes, to make themselves the slaves of the sick-room and nursery."

"Such was not the teaching of our New

England faith," said I. "Absolute unselfishness, the death of self,—such were its teachings, and such as Esther's the characters it made. 'Do the duty nearest thee' was the only message it gave to 'women with a mission'; and from duty to duty, from one self-denial to another, they rose to a majesty of moral strength impossible to any form of mere self-indulgence. It is of souls thus sculptured and chiselled by self-denial and self-discipline that the living temple of the perfect hereafter is to be built. The pain of the discipline is short, but the glory of the fruition is eternal."—*Harriet Beecher Stowe.*

THE STILL HOUR.

IT PROFITETH THEE NOTHING.

"My child, cleanse thou thy heart : this daily life
Of work and alms, how can it profit thee
Except low down upon the altar burn
The hidden fire of holy charity ?

"Leave here thy deeds : go seek the inner shrine,
There watch and wait and pray, and tend thy
soul,
Till comes the grace which gives no outward
sign,
Till heaven and earth are bound to its
control."

"Father, well know I, I have utmost need
To tend that hidden fire, both night and day ;
But who will warm my cold, my hungry feed,
While I retire to weep and watch and pray ?

"Father, before the inmost, stillest shrine,
I hear the echo of that piercing cry,
And can no more implore the grace divine,
But turn to serve this poor humanity.

"Father, it may be that my light is small ;
But I would rather bear the pains that may
In purgatory my lost soul befall
Than leave these ones to faint upon their
way."

"My child, I fear me much, thou dost postpone
God's great eternity to thy low time ;
But he doth deal with every heart alone,
And will not judge thy error as thy crime."

Disciples Hymn Book.

God has placed us here to grow, just as he placed the trees and flowers. The trees and the flowers grow unconsciously, and by no effort of their own. Man, too, grows unconsciously, and is educated by circum-

stances. But he can also control those circumstances and direct the course of his life. He can educate himself. He can, by effort and thought, acquire knowledge, become accomplished, refine and purify his nature, develop his power, strengthen his character. And, because he *can* do this, he ought to do it.

Yet we must add that this is not all. There is something more. "Grow up." "Grow up in all things"; but also "grow up in all things into Him who is our Head, even Christ." This is what Goethe, with all his wisdom, failed to see. This is what makes the apostolic maxim wiser than his. To grow up is an end, but not the final end. Grow up, in order to grow up into Christ. That is, since Christ is another name for generous Love, cultivate and unfold all powers in order to do good, for the sake of helping, saving, inspiring, guiding, animating, encouraging, other souls. Develop all your powers, but for universal usefulness.

If God finishes everything in nature, if he makes the rhodora beautiful in the wood where no human eye can see it, and paints in exquisite tints the shell at the bottom of the ocean, we may trust that he will not rest till he has made all our souls and all our lives pure, generous, noble, beautiful. We are as yet only the roots of a future beautiful plant. The best man or woman is only a shoot a little way out of the ground. We are God's plants, God's flowers. Be sure that he will help us to unfold into something serenely fair, nobly perfect, if not in this life, then in another. If he teaches us not to be satisfied till we have finished our work, he will not be satisfied till he has finished his.

If we can believe this of God, then we can love him as we love our father, as we love our friend, in whose answering love we have perfect confidence. Such a confidence in God as this is alone the source of genuine piety. Not till we cease thinking of him as justice, as power, not till we are able to trust in him as one who means to save us perfectly, and unfold us into all the strength and beauty for which he has designed us, can we love him with all our heart or love our brother man like ourselves.

James Freeman Clarke.

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB.

[Send all matter for this department to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 3 Webster Street, Alston, Mass.]

OFFERS.

Will any mother who would like to have "Gentle Measures in Training the Young," by Jacob Abbott, or any one who would like "Black Beauty," address Miss Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass.?

The following books are offered by the Cambridge Branch. Address Mrs. C. W. Kettell, 19 Brewster Street, Cambridge, Mass. Old correspondents will please address the members to whom they have formerly written. In order to receive books from the Cambridge Branch, it will be necessary henceforth to send a reference with the first request.

Educational.

French.—Voltaire's "Charles XII."; Voltaire's "Chefs d'Œuvres Dramatiques"; "Fables de La Fontaine"; "Un Club au Village"; Michelet's "L'Insecte"; "Paul et Virginie"; Fleury's "Histoire de France"; "Le Grand-père"; "Feu Lionel"; "Méthode Berlitz pour les Enfants"; Gibert's "Elementary French Reader"; "Les Enfants Patriotes"; "Pour une Épingle."

German.—Schiller's "Marie Stuart," "Ge-dichte," "Wilhelm Tell"; Adler's "German Dictionary"; Humboldt's "Ansichten der Natur"; Fouqué's "Undine."

Italian.—Deodate's "Lettere d'una Peruviana"; Goave's "Novelle"; Tasso's "La Gerusalemme Liberata"; Ahn's "Italian Grammar"; Sauer's "Grammar"; Manzoni's "I Promessi Sposi."

Fiction.

"Tom Brown's School-days"; "Auld Licht Idylls"; "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde"; "Kidnapped"; "Master of Ballantrae"; "A Little Pilgrim," Oliphant; "The Absentee"; "The Pathfinder"; "No Thoroughfare"; "Last Days of Pompeii"; "Twice-told Tales," Hawthorne; "Mistress and Maid," Mulock.

Miscellaneous.

Lamborn's "Dragon Flies versus Mosquitoes"; Bartlett's "Familiar Quotations"; Calvert's "Specimens of Foreign Literature"; Warner's "Life on the Nile"; Longfellow's "Hyperion."

Juvenile.

"Marcus"; "Helps-over Hard Places"; "Recollections of my Childhood"; "The Runaway"; "Child-life on the Tide-water."

Any society that is starting, and would like a number of copies of the Hymn, Tune, and Service Book, also the Sabbath-school Service and Hymnal, by Rev. Henry G. Spaulding, will please apply to Mrs. G. W. Smallwood, 104 W. 84th Street, New York, N.Y.

The following books are offered by the Women's Alliance, Second Church, Salem, Mass. Address Miss L. Adele Decker, 4 Mt. Vernon Street, Salem, Mass.

Educational.

Boyd's "Composition and Rhetoric"; Magill's "French Grammar"; Magill's "French Reader"; Andrews's "Latin Reader"; Allen's "Latin Reader"; Adler's "Progressive German Reader"; Hanson's "Preparatory Latin Prose Book"; Mayhew's "Book-keeping"; Greenleaf's "Elementary Algebra"; "The Young Debater and Chairman's Assistant"; "Le Grand-père"; Blake's "Natural Philosophy"; "History of United States, 1834"; "History of England"; "Geography"; "History of United States"; Franklin's "Fifth Reader."

Religious.

Monthly Religious Magazine, F. D. Huntington, D.D., editor, 7 bound volumes; "Lectures to Young Men," Beecher; "Lectures on Christian Doctrine," Peabody; "Doctrines of Christianity," Eliot; "Formation of Christian Character," Ware; back numbers of *Unitarian Review*, *Christian Register*, *Unitarian*.

Miscellaneous.

"The House on the Scar"; "Barbara Allan"; "Cosmopolis"; "Mosquito, a Tale of the Mexican Frontier"; "My Lady Nicotine"; Tennyson's "Poems"; Tupper's "Poetical Works"; "Notes of a Theological Student"; "From the Hub to the Hudson"; "Holy Grail"; "Sketch of O. W. Holmes"; "Stories for Children"; "Eyebright," Susan Coolidge; *Littell's Living Age*; *Popular Science*; *Munsey's*; *Ladies' Home Journal*; *Scribner's*; "Black Beauty"; "Ships that pass in the Night."

The following books are offered by Miss Louise H. Bailey, 112 Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown, Mass.: "Arithmetic," "Trigonometry," "Astronomy," "Geometry."

REQUESTS.

Libraries.

Standing requests for libraries from:—

Mrs. O. A. Langston, Sidney, Comanche County, Texas;

Mrs. C. S. Stowell, Magnolia, Boulder County, Colorado;

Mr. Davis M'Carn, Anamosa, Iowa;

Mrs. D. Jayne, Jamestown, Chautauqua County, New York;

Mrs. Emma Miner, Lisbon, New Hampshire;

Stephen D. Rhoden, La Pine, Crenshaw County, Alabama;

Mrs. Isadore E. Rice, Oakland, Oregon.

Mrs. Margaret Ogilvie, "The Bonnie Briars," Grand Junction, Colorado. Mrs. Ogilvie is struggling to place in each school in her county, where the school committee will furnish a bookcase, a collection of good books. She has already supplied several schools, but there are three or four more in which she is particularly interested.

Those who send offers and requests for the Book Club will do us a kindness by noting the following suggestions: 1. Please write very clearly. 2. Do not use a pencil. 3. Do not use contractions, especially names of States (as Cal. and Col. for California, Colorado). 4. Write on one side only of the paper. 5. Do not forget to give your full address. (The State is now and then omitted.)

Mrs. H. L. Stevenson, Home City, Ohio, will be very glad to receive "The Little Minister."

Mrs. Florence Sheppard, Diamond Hill, North Carolina, is in need of light reading and illustrated papers. Having the care of an invalid child, she has not much time for reading, but asks for some to pass away the lonely evenings.

Trench's "Study of Words" is asked for by Mrs. L. E. Abbott-Holt, Morganton, North Carolina.

Rev. J. C. Gibson, Edwards, Florida, would be glad to have the *Youth's Companion*

for his children, and will pass it on to others.

Mrs. David Fields, Chelsea, Indian Territory, asks for a grammar, geography, and reading-book suitable for her little girl, eleven years of age.

Mrs. Nannie Hendrick, of "The Hollow," Virginia, would be very grateful for school-books for her two children, Lewis and Grace, aged respectively six and four years. She is very poor, and needs help.

She has four children in all, and teaches them herself. The oldest one can read.

Will be pleased to receive any religious books or papers. Can use many thousands. P. M. Lowe, National Soldiers' Home, Elizabeth City, County, Virginia (near Hampton, Virginia).

Mrs. Mary C. Evans, Shelbyville, Tennessee, asks for November and December *St. Nicholas* (1897). She would also be glad of current numbers if any one has them to spare.

Mr. Ira Vintry, a young man living in Mt. Pleasant, Florida, would like reading, and will distribute it.

Mrs. Sallie H. Holloway, Pine Grove, Texas, asks for any Unitarian reading.

Mrs. Mattie Frizzell, Pine Grove, Texas, a shut-in, would like "Perfect Faith."

I have been a subscriber to *Cheerful Letter* for some time, and enjoy it very much. I live out here in the Indian Territory, where it is very hard to procure books of any kind. I would be very grateful for any reading. I have five children, the oldest sixteen years of age, the youngest six. Address Mrs. Bettie Bizzle, Durwood, Indian Territory.

E. W. King, Batopilas, Mexico, writes: "Reading matter, in English, very scarce here." In this case the Post-office Mission will supply Unitarian literature; and I hope that *The Cheerful Letter* will be able to send other reading matter, either religious or secular.

Will *Cheerful Letter* friends please send any odd or current numbers of any of the popular magazines (illustrated ones preferred) to Mrs. Mary Pindar, Fulton, Morrow County, Ohio?

I asked through *The Cheerful Letter* last year for literature to distribute here in my neighborhood. I have received an ample response. But some good people have sent reading, and I do not know their addresses. I take this occasion to thank them for their kindness, and assure them that the contributions are appreciated by many in this neighborhood. I am happy to distribute all the literature that is sent me to those who want just such reading matter. S. G. Davis, Limona, Florida.

I have been for eight years an invalid from rheumatism; and, though not always compelled to remain indoors, I am unable to work for the support of my family. We live in the northern part of the province of Ontario. I am fond of good reading, but am unable to buy, and should be so glad of books or magazines for myself and children. I should like to have a large-print edition of "Songs and Solos." S. C. Gardiner, Iron Bridge, Ontario, Canada.

I have enjoyed reading *Sabbath Reading*, which some of the readers of *Cheerful Letter* have so kindly sent me. The reading in them is very helpful, to one who has so few privileges. I would be very thankful for any books by "Josiah Allen's Wife." Mrs. Guy Whitten, Clinton, Maine.

I write you on behalf of some poor folks at this place. I have been furnishing all the reading matter I could to them, but that is limited. I appeal to your club for any kind of reading, and I will see to distributing it. Magazines, stories for young people, second-hand books, could be used to advantage. Anything you may send will be gratefully received and faithfully used. Rev. A. J. Blackburn. Address Blackburn, Morgan County, Ohio.

Dear Cheerful Letter Friends,—I wish I could tell you how much I have enjoyed the nice magazines and books you have sent me during the past winter. I could not write my thanks to all, for some sent no address. So I take this way to tell you that I am indeed grateful for your kindness.

I have a few books I would send to any who want them: "The Country Doctor," "A Window in Thrums," "Cricket on the Hearth," "Called Back."

If any one has the May, June, and July

(1897) numbers of the *Puritan*, I would be so thankful for them; also for "Don Orsino," by Marion Crawford.

I am a crippled shut-in, a widow, with little to break the tiresome monotony; and good reading is always welcome. I will return the favor in any way I can. Mrs. A. C. Earl, Marengo, Morrow County, Ohio.

We have moved from Kansas to South Dakota. We are living between the Cheyenne and Bad Rivers,—sixty miles west of Ft. Pierre and eighteen miles south-east of Leslie, which is our post-office, and where there is a school for Indian children.

We have no neighbors very near. It is very lonely. My sons are herding sheep. It is very monotonous. We are all fond of good reading. Will our friends be so kind as to send us some good novels (paper-covered will do), also magazines,—*Lippincott*, *Century*, or any, but not older, please, than 1897,—or, occasionally, a good newspaper, so that we may know what is going on in the world at large? We are hoping not only to be able to get all these for ourselves, but to help others. We have sent away and loaned, again and again, all the books and magazines which have been given us, and for which I have always returned grateful thanks whenever I knew the giver's address. Now that we are so lonely and isolated, we ask to be remembered again. Put "yourself in our place!" Mrs. M. S. Sibley, Leslie, Sterling County, South Dakota.

I have odd numbers of the *Housekeeper*, also *Youth's Companion*, I will send to any one who would like them. I would like a book of recitation for school speaking, suitable for children from eight to fourteen, and will return postage. Will those that love letter-writing please write to me, telling about their homes and where they live, and I will answer. I think that would be quite interesting to some of us who cannot afford to travel and see such places for ourselves. Mrs. M. Rhodes, Goldfield, El Paso County, Colorado.

Mrs. Henry Shake, Sandborn, Indiana, asks for an old music book called "Southern Harmony," also a song beginning, "There was a little family who lived in Bethany."

The address of Mrs. Elida E. Durain is, for the present, Chandler, Lincoln County, Oklahoma Territory.

THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL.

[All articles for this department should be sent to Mrs. J. S. Howe, Chestnut Street, Brookline, Mass.]

FROM ONE TO FIVE.

"I have never even thought of his education," said a mother, speaking of her little son the other day. "I think it will be time enough to begin when he is seven."

But, as I looked at the bright little fellow by her side, I thought how far his education had already advanced, and that, although he was only six years old, he had learned what would probably determine the course of his future life; for it is by first impressions that character is moulded. We all know what a difference there is even in babies,—a difference which is largely due to heredity, and partly, also, to circumstances. But nurseries are the hot-beds from which the garden of the world is stocked; and, while we can almost see the tender plants springing up before our eyes, we need to exercise the greatest vigilance, for the winning ways of childhood hide many a fault which might be corrected, if discovered in time.

Do not laugh at the cunning fibs that your three-year-old child tells, for every time you do you make it easier for him to lie; and if, when he is fifteen, you deplore his want of principle, you will have yourself to blame for it. Never make light of anything that is wrong, however trifling it may be; for, if there be a germ of evil in it, you know not into what it may grow. Example is better than precept; and, if your children see that you abhor all false ways, they will soon learn to shun them.

But it is not only in regard to morals that children need direction in their earliest years, though that is of the first importance. Physically and mentally, they are advancing daily; and you cannot stay their progress until you have more time to devote to them. When we think how common it is for parents to leave their children to the care of ignorant nurses during the years of infancy, we do not wonder at the host of incompetent men and women who, through no fault of theirs, are thrown upon the charity of a world that grows yearly more exacting. There is no longer a demand for anything short of excellence, and those who

do not rise above mediocrity must go to the wall. Habits of concentration, accuracy, and punctuality, so necessary in every rank of life, are generally formed in the nursery or not at all.

See two infants, just able to stand alone. One will amuse himself for half an hour with a rattle or rubber doll, while the other will seize a toy, and, throwing it down, hold out his hands for something else, soon to be treated in like manner. Here is an opportunity for the first lesson in concentration. A wise mother will take up the toy and point out something to admire, until she has gained the child's attention, and he looks at it as he has never done before. Perhaps there is not much intelligence in the look, but something is gained if he has only been made to see what he did not see before. Accustomed to seeing things, he will soon learn to observe for himself. Show him a picture,—the interior of a room, for example,—and let him identify the various articles of furniture, etc., and you will be surprised to see how interested he will become.

I remember a dear boy, fifteen months old, who sat upon my knee and designated each article by a sign, for he could not speak; and, when I thought everything had been noticed, he gave an exclamation of delight, and, putting his little finger on the mantelpiece, said "bow-wow." On closer inspection I saw there a china dog, which had escaped my observation, being so very minute.

It would be well if mothers could remember that nothing which concerns young children is so trifling as to be considered beneath their notice. Their lives are made up of little things, all of which have an influence for good or evil that will be carried on into the future.

Accustom your children to relate what they have seen and heard in a straightforward and concise manner. It may be only the perambulations of a caterpillar, and not at all interesting to you; but it will be an exercise of some value to them. Many a man has received his first lesson in elocution from his mother; and a hesitating or diffuse habit of expression, which is often acquired in the nursery, is difficult to overcome.

Any one can see what a difference there is in different persons in regard to manual

dexterity. Some are conscious that their usefulness is very much impaired by awkwardness: this is perhaps more noticeable in women than in men; but an easy, graceful way of doing things is always an advantage, and it is in the nursery that children learn to use their hands. Correct ideas of color, form, and measurements, are also gained in infancy. In fact, a child learns more from one to five than it does from five to ten.

Our grandmothers thought that education began with the alphabet, but most of us are wiser now; for we know that balls, kites, hoops, bows and arrows, marbles and skipping-ropes, are all important aids in education.

Babyhood.

AMUSEMENT COLUMN.

[Please send all material for this department to Miss E. D. Chapman, 34 Buckingham Street, Cambridge, Mass.]

CHARADES.

1.

As the stream goes down to the river,
And the river out to the ocean,
In the windings and turnings of each,
My *first* is found in the motion.

On the bosom of stream and river,
In the craft of every kind,
My useful *second* and *third*
An important factor you'll find.

If all the sail there scattered
Could in one company be,
'Twould make an imposing pageant,
And in it my *whole* you'd see.

E. P. P.

2.

When Rome was in her palmiest days,
My *first* was not.
And now in this degenerate age,
So say the aged and the sage,
My *next* is not.
'Tis found in mint, but not in juleps:
It comes from roses and lilies, too.
My *whole*, more oft from tulips.

CONUNDRUMS.

1.

A colored waiter dropped a platter on which was a roast turkey. What four catastrophes took place in consequence of his carelessness?

2.

Why does a duck go into the pond?
Why does he come out again?
Why does he go in for the second time?
Why does he come out again?

POETICAL PL.

Won eth thribg nongrim-rats dasy bring-
hear
Moces candimg morf het seat dan dales whit
erh
Het flewroy amy how form erh neger alp
whorst
Het lowley clowisp dan eth leap porrimmes.

PUZZLE.

I with a five and nothing before it,
Add a thousand and make a Greek poet.

Answers to puzzles in the April number:—

ANAGRAM.

Sutler, ulster, lustre, lurest, rulest, result, rustle.

CHARADES.

1. Tea chest (teachest).
2. Toad.

ENIGMA.

Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days.

MY FRIENDS.

Slow as I journey on from day to day,
I come on other wanderers in my path,
Some sad, some singing, some in bitter wrath,
And some who join me for a little way,—

Not always very far. Perhaps we see
That one step moves too slow and one too fast;
Some I have overtaken, loved, and passed;
And some there are who would not wait for me.
Some cross my march just once,—across the lawn
I hear a footstep; we shall almost meet!
Alas! We may not stay too long to greet!
A nod, a pleasant word,—and he is gone!

How many million friends there are whose lot
Keeps them outside my path for life's short while!
But through the distance and the dark I smile;
For I can love them, though I see them not.

—R. B. Hale.

THE SANDPIPER.

Across the narrow beach we flit,—
 One little sandpiper and I;
 And fast I gather, bit by bit,
 The scattered driftwood bleached and dry.
 The wild waves reach their hands for it,
 The wild wind raves, the tide runs high,
 As up and down the beach we flit,—
 One little sandpiper and I.

Above our heads the sullen clouds
 Scud black and swift across the sky;
 Like silent ghosts in misty shrouds
 Stand out the white light-houses high.
 Almost as far as eye can reach,
 I see the close-reefed vessels fly,
 As fast we flit along the beach,—
 One little sandpiper and I.

I watch him as he skims along,
 Uttering his sweet and mournful cry.
 He starts not at my fitful song
 Or flash of fluttering drapery.
 He has no thought of any wrong,
 He scans me with a fearless eye.
 Stanch friends are we, well tried and strong,—
 The little sandpiper and I.

Comrade, where wilt thou be to-night,
 When the loosed storm breaks furiously?
 My driftwood fire will burn so bright!
 To what warm shelter canst thou fly?
 I do not fear for thee, though wroth
 The tempest rushes through the sky;
 For are we not God's children both,
 Thou, little sandpiper, and I?

— *Celia Thaxter.*

There are souls in the world who have the gift of finding joy everywhere, and of leaving it behind them when they go. Joy gushes from under their fingers like jets of light. Their influence is an inevitable gladdening of the heart. It seems as if a shadow of God's own gift had passed upon them. They give light without meaning to shine. These bright hearts have a great work to do for God.— *Faber.*

Faith is the happy consciousness that God is around us with his perpetual care, beneath us with his supreme power, above us with his providential blessing, within us with his constant inspiration.

IMPORTANT NOTICES.

There will be a meeting of the Cheerful Letter Exchange on the first Friday in

May at 10.30 A.M. at 25 Beacon Street, Boston. All interested in this work are cordially invited to be present.

The next meeting will be October 7.

THE ATTENTION OF ALL READERS OF "THE CHEERFUL LETTER" IS CALLED TO THE FOLLOWING NOTICE:—

It is contrary to the rules of the Cheerful Letter Exchange to allow any one to make use of our paper by addressing letters, asking for money, clothing, or other articles, to those whose names are printed in the paper. This prohibition includes requests to borrow money and the offering of articles for sale. The name of any person who infringes this rule will be dropped from our list; and any one who receives a request of this description is desired by our Executive Committee to return no answer, but to enclose the letter at once to our secretary, Miss Langmaid.

During Miss Clarke's absence in Europe, Miss Bertha Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass., will act as editor.

After May 19 the personal address of our treasurer will be Miss Louise Howe, Box 21, Nahant, Mass. But subscriptions may be addressed to her or left for her at 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass., at any season.

DIRECTIONS.

EDITOR,—Miss L. Freeman Clarke.

SECRETARY OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Miss Bertha Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass.

SECRETARY OF BOOK CLUB OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 3 Webster Street, Allston, Mass.

TREASURER OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Miss Louise Howe, Box 21, Nahant, Mass., or 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

Subscriptions and renewals should be sent to the treasurer, also all changes of address and requests for discontinuance. The subscription is fifty cents a year. If subscribers do not receive the paper regularly, they are requested to notify Miss Howe at once.

Those not able to subscribe for the paper, but desiring to receive it, may do so by writing to Miss Louise Howe, as above. Please give full name and address. Many of our members take the paper in order to send it to those who are not able to subscribe for it.

Notice that requests for membership and for correspondents go to Miss Langmaid, our secretary; requests for books and offers of books, to Mrs. Nichols.